

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 20-0239R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Cohen, President Scott, Councilmembers Bullock, Henry, Burnett, Clarke, Middleton, Dorsey, Pinkett, Reisinger, Sneed, Stokes

Introduced and read first time: July 13, 2020

Assigned to: Health Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Police Department, Health Department, Fire Department, Mayor's Office of Human Services

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Responding to Mental Health Crises**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore
4 City Health Department, the Baltimore City Fire Department, Mayor's Office of Human
5 Services, Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc., the 911 Call
6 Center, and advocates of mental health to investigate how behavioral and mental health crises
7 are handled, identify gaps, and develop the best path forward for addressing and de-escalating
8 crises.

9 **Recitals**

10 In light of recent events that have taken place across the U.S. and Baltimore, we must
11 reexamine our response to behavioral and mental health crises. We seek to decriminalize mental
12 health challenges. Too often, we have asked police officers to solve issues that they are ill
13 equipped to handle. Police are not clinicians. Mental health issues like schizophrenia and
14 addiction require a mental health response led by mental health professionals. Law enforcement
15 has a role to play in responding to crises and supporting other professionals but sending police
16 alone can escalate tense situations and result in bad outcomes for everyone. We also know that
17 because of implicit bias and our legacy of racism, black and brown people experiencing mental
18 health crises are most at risk for negative interactions with law enforcement.

19 In Baltimore, there is a lack of clarity regarding how the 911 system handles mental and
20 behavioral health calls. Through this hearing we seek to illuminate how the various agencies and
21 nonprofits work together to reduce harm and provide support. Individuals experiencing a mental
22 health crisis should receive treatment from healthcare professionals and clinicians. They should
23 also receive aftercare and proper follow up.

24 As we experience both a local and national uprising, we must rethink every facet of public
25 safety by better incorporating mental health professionals and existing relationships within our
26 communities. We must also make sure our systems clearly communicate with each other.

27 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That the City
28 Council invites representatives from the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Health
29 Department, the Baltimore City Fire Department, Mayor's Office of Human Services, Behavioral

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 Health System Baltimore, Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc., the 911 Call Center, and advocates of
2 mental health to investigate how behavioral and mental health crises are handled, identify gaps,
3 and develop the best path forward for addressing and de-escalating crises.

4 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
5 Police Commissioner, the Health Commissioner, the Fire Chief, the Director of the Mayor's
6 Office of Human Services, the President and CEO of Behavioral Health System Baltimore, the
7 Executive Director of Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc., and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the
8 City Council.